The Early History of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society

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INTRODUCTION

This history is based on information gleaned from various sources, including contemporary numismatic periodicals, auction catalogs, and Society publications. For many years the Society's original Proceedings books were lost, but these are now in the Society's possession. They have been invaluable in compiling the present work, and the author is indebted to the unknown individuals whose efforts saved these unique documents from the Wreck of Time. This paper outlines the history of the Society's early days, from its founding in 1878 through its decline and suspension in 1889.

OVERVIEW

Eight men met in Pittsburgh on June 14, 1878 to form the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society. The founders were a diverse group, united by a common interest in the study of numismatics. They included three clerks, a salesman, a tobacconist/coin dealer, a painter, a newspaper carrier, and a freshly-graduated college valedictorian and future millionaire.

The Society grew rapidly in its early years, and its members were very active. They quickly adopted a Constitution and set of Bylaws, and began forming a numismatic library and coin cabinet. To publicize the hobby of numismatics they set up a Society coin exhibit at the great Pittsburgh Exposition in 1878 and 1879. Souvenir medals were struck in each year to jointly commemorate the Exposition and the founding of WPNS.

The Society did not develop in isolation; its members subscribed and contributed to the various numismatic periodicals and auction sales from other cities. The Pittsburgh area was no numismatic backwater. There were at least four active coin dealers in Western Pennsylvania, and three of them were WPNS members. The first President of WPNS

catalogued a total of 13 sales of numismatic material for auctions held in Pittsburgh.

Society members were not without their differences. Disputes large and small arose among the members periodically. Separate incidents led to the expulsion of two of the founding members within a year. In 1882 the Society would expel another founder.

Other founders were lost for the more usual reasons: sickness, death, or the lack of time or interest to continue numismatic activity. One founder sold his coin collection in 1879 and resigned from the Society in 1880. Another founder resigned in 1882, apparently to devote more time to his business affairs. The companies he founded made him one of the wealthiest men in the country, providing him the resources to resume his hobby in a big way at a later date.

Like this prodigal founder, WPNS itself went through a period of dormancy. Its membership dwindled in the 1880's, and in 1889 the remaining members voted to dissolve the Society. But the fire of numismatics was not extinguished; its embers smoldered through this dark period and after two decades the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society was rekindled under its original constitution with several of its old members and founders back in the fold. The Society has continued to this day, its members meeting monthly to share their numismatic knowledge and fellowship.

This paper summarizes the history of the first golden age of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society, and is dedicated to the gentlemen who made up its membership through 1889. These men were the pioneers of numismatics in Western Pennsylvania. They blazed a trail still followed by the like-minded travelers of today.

THE FOUNDERS

S. H. Morgan

The first President of the Society, S.H. Morgan is best known today as Pittsburgh's most prolific 19th-century coin cataloguer. Between March 11, 1879 and July 27, 1881, Morgan authored thirteen auction catlogues for coin sales held in the offices of D.F. Henry at 68 Fifth Avenue in Pittsburgh. Morgan's own coins were in turn auctioned by John Haseltine in January 1880, and W. E. Woodward in April 1882.

Little else is known about Morgan. He may be the Samuel Morgan listed as a tobacconist in the 1878 Pittsburgh city directory. The November 14, 1879 WPNS meeting was held at Morgan's home at Millvale Station, P.R.R. (Pennsylvania Rail Road). The 1880 WPNS Constitution and Bylaws booklet lists

Morgan's address as Elm Street, Sixteenth Ward. In Woodward's 1882 catalog Morgan is identified as a resident of Louisville, KY.

Morgan was apparently an older gentleman. He had been around numismatics long enough to have the knowledge required to catalogue so many coin sales. He was obviously respected by his fellow founders, who elected him their first President. He had enough free time in 1878 and 1879 to attend each day of the monthlong Pittsburgh Expositions. Morgan left Pittsburgh in 1881 and the following year sold his coin collection. All of these facts seem to indicate than Morgan was retired or semi-retired at the time WPNS was organized.

Frank J. Kirk

The first Vice-President of WPNS, Frank J. Kirk was part owner of a painting business, Wilson & Kirk, with offices at 84 Fourth Avenue. His home address was 149 Wylie Avenue; this address was listed in the 1880 Constitution booklet. Little else is known about Kirk. His coin collection was catalogued by Morgan in June, 1879. The collection included mainly U.S. coins, plus assorted foreign coins, medals, and some colonial currency. The bulk of the collection consisted of a date set of cents and half cents from 1793 to 1857, plus some varieties. The highlight of the sale was lot 34, a fine 1793 Liberty Cap cent, which brought $9.00. The total sale realized $89.95. Kirk resigned from the Society in December 1880. He apparently remained in Pittsburgh, since he was still listed in the 1890 city directory.

George W. Rode

The first Secretary of the Society, George Rode occupied the position for most of the Society's first eleven years. If any one individual deserves special recognition for service to the Society during its formative years, it is George Rode. Then as now, the Secretary is the workhorse of the Society, writing minutes of every meeting, and handling correspondence with other collectors and Societies.

As this paper will show, Rode's correspondence on behalf of the Society was extensive. He exchanged letters with the American Numismatic Society in New York, and publicized the Society's formation and activities via the editors of various contemporary numismatic periodicals. Without these precious records, little would be known today of the existence of the band of coin enthusiasts who created the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society.

Rode is listed as a clerk in the 1878 Pittsburgh city directory, working at 49 Fifth Avenue. It is not known what

type of business Rode was in. This work address is where Rode recieved his numismatic correspondence, and is the address listed in the 1880 Constitution booklet. By 1899 Rode was listed as a cashier at 255 Fifth Avenue, living at 38 Hazelwood Avenue.

Rode became charter member number 12 of the American Numismatic Association, and was nominated by founder George Heath to serve on the organization's "Board of Temporary Organization." Rode also served as the A.N.A.'s Superintendent of Exchange in 1891-1892. At the October 1, 1892 A.N.A. Convention in Pittsburgh, he served as Secretary.

E. F. Maynard

Elbert F. Maynard was the Society's first Treasurer. He had several occupations over the years. In the year of the Society's founding, he was listed as a clerk at 148 Third Avenue. His address as listed in the 1880 Constitution booklet was a post office box. By 1890 Maynard was listed in the Pittsburgh city directory as the proprietor of Hotel Crescent at 16 Smithfield Street. By 1899 he was listed as a salesman at 717 Liberty Avenue, making his home on Ridge Avenue in Allegeny.

R. W. Shipman

Robert W. Shipman probably qualifies as the earliest known coin cataloger in Western Pennsylvania. He cataloged a 12-page, 359-lot sale for the D. F. Henry auction house, on January 28th, 1879 (two months before Morgan's first sale). The sale contained ancient Roman coins, U.S. coins and medals, and foreign coins including siege pieces. This is the only sale known to be cataloged by Shipman. He was later a charter member of the A.N.A. (member #79).

Henry McKnight

Little is known about Henry McKnight. He is listed as a clerk in the 1878 Pittsburgh city directory. Elected Treasurer of WPNS in June 1882, he also took over as Secretary when George Rode resigned the position on March 2, 1883. At the June 1883 business meeting he was offically elected to both positions. Rode returned to the Secretary's position in 1884. McKnight served as curator from June 1886 until the Society's dissolution in 1889. He also became a charter member of the A.N.A. (member #51), and presided over the A.N.A.'s October 1, 1892 Convention in Pittsburgh.

John Rivett

John Rivett was the son of Eliza and Nathaniel Rivett, who ran a news depot as early as 1860 at 709 Penn Avenue. In 1878 Nathaniel ran a variety store at 625 Penn Avenue. There is no listing for John Rivett that year, but it is assumed he worked at the family store. By 1890 Nathaniel and John were listed as "paper carriers" at 6021 Rodman Street in East Liberty. By 1890 his father had passed away, and John was listed as a "circulator" at the home he shared with his mother at 315 N. Sheridan Avenue.

George H. Clapp

At the age of 19, Clapp was probably the youngest of the eight founders, having just graduated from college in 1877. He had attended the Western University of Pennsylvania, (later renamed the University of Pittsburgh). His scholarship and talents were well-recognized at the time: Clapp graduated first in his class and delivered the commencement address. An enterprising lad, he had made an arrangement with the keeper of a nearby toll bridge to search his till for strange coins and old coppers. We can only wonder today if his fellow WPNS founders realized the extent to which Clapp would succeed in his later endeavors in numismatics, science, and business.

Born on December 14, 1858 in Allegheny City, Clapp developed an early interest in science. As a young man he worked for several years in the machine shop of the Penn Cotton Mill, then became a chemist at the Black Diamond Steel Works. There he became an assistant to Capt. Alfred E. Hunt, a metallurgist of note, who was just three years older than Clapp. In 1883 the two set out on their own, forming Hunt & Clapp, a firm of consulting engineers.

In 1888 the men met Charles Martin Hall, a young inventor who had recently discovered an electrolytic process for reducing aluminum. Previous methods of extracting aluminum from ore were very expensive, and the two were quick to realize the tremendous potential of Hall's process. With friends, they formed the Pittsburgh Reduction Company, which later became the Aluminum Corporation of America (ALCOA).

Clapp served the corporation for many years as its Treasurer, Secretary, Vice President, and member of the Board of Directors. The original Hunt & Clapp partnership became the Pittsburgh Testing Laboratory, where Clapp served as president. Clapp was also the first president of the firm which became Fischer Scientific Corporation. All three companies are still very much in business today.

He also served at times as a director of the Reliance Life Insurance Company and the Farmer's National Bank of Pittsburgh. He was a member of the Board of Trustees of the Carnegie Museum of Natural History from 1909 until his death

forty years later. In addition to his numismatic interests Clapp was an accomplished conchologist (a student of shells). His collection of 150,000 items was donated to the Carnegie Museum.

Clapp was the oldest living alumnus of the University of Pittsburgh, and he made many generous contributions to its growth. He served as President of its Board of Trustees for 47 years. Clapp Hall, a science building, was erected on the campus in his honor.

He made his home on Woodland Road near Sewickley, and maintained a summer residence at Kennebunkport, Maine. He passed away on March 31, 1949 at the age of ninety.

Clapp will be forever known in numismatic circles for his extensive contributions to the study of Early American Coppers. His detailed studies of die varieties on early cents were incorporated into the classic reference, Early American Cents, published by William Sheldon in 1949. Clapp's own work was made available previously in his self-published 1931 work, The United States Cents of the Years 1798-1799, and his 1947 collaboration with Howard Newcomb, The United States Cents of the Years 1795-1796, 1797, and 1800.

MEETINGS

In the early years of WPNS, meetings were held weekly. At the first organizational meeting on June 14, 1878, it was resolved "that Friday be adopted as the regular meeting night." The first Bylaws formalized this arrangement, stating that "the regular meetings shall be held every Friday night at 8 o'clock P.M." The location of these first meetings is unknown, but it is likely that they took place in downtown Pittsburgh.

On occasion, the Society met at the home of a member. The first of these special meetings took place on November 1, 1878, at the "residence of President Morgan, Millvale Station P.R.R." The town of Millvale is now part of the City of Pittsburgh, across the Allegheny River about 5 miles upstream from The Point. Perhaps members travelled to the meeting aboard passenger trains of the Pennsylvania Rail Road.

On the following Friday (November 8) the Society convened at the home of E. F. Maynard. On November 29th and December 20th the Society was hosted by F. J. Kirk. Two special meetings were held at the Pittsburgh Exposition Society buildings on September 4th and 20th.

Throughout 1878 the eight founders continued to meet as

scheduled. George Rode and F. J. Kirk were present at every meeting, and S. H. Morgan missed just one. The typical meeting consisted of six of the eight founding members. Clapp was absent the entire summer. He attended for the first time on August 30th, but was a regular for the remainder of the year.

The First Constitution

The only recorded business at the first meeting was the election of officers, adoption of the name of the Society, and the selection of Friday as the regular meeting night.
At the second meeting (June 21, 1878) the first Constitution and Bylaws were adopted. The Constitution, as neatly recorded in George Rode's hand, consisted of just five articles, reproduced below:

Constitution of
The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society

Adopted June 21st, 1878

Article I

The Society shall be known as "The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society"

Article II

The objects of this Society shall be -
1st. For the purpose of exchanging views on the different Coins and Medals of the United States and foreign countries.
2nd. The improvement of our minds on Numismatics.
3rd. The formation of a Library and Cabinet relating to the study of the same.

Article III

The officers of this Society shall be a President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer. The officers shall be elected at the last meeting in June.
They shall hold office for one (1) year from the first day of July, following.

Article IV

The dues shall be Twenty-five (25) Cents a month.
Any member who is indebted to the Society for more than three (3) months dues, shall be suspended until all his dues have been paid.

Article V

The Society shall not be dissolved as long as five (5) members remain, except with the consent of all the members.

A Year of Firsts

The first item of Society business following the organizational issues was to purchase and auction a collection of coins belonging to one of the members. Apparently this was done as a "fund raiser" for the new organization. The minutes of the June 21st, 1878 meeting record a resolution "that the President be authorized to buy the collection of American Coins from Mr. Maynard for Twenty (20) Dollars. Resolved, that the above collection be sold at auction at the next meeting." On June 28th "Mr. Morgan was appointed auctioneer to sell the collection of Coins bought from Mr. Maynard. The collection was then sold, and the Secretary reported that it brought $33.36." At the following meeting (July 5th) "a warrant was drawn for Twenty (20) Dollars to pay for the coins sold..."

The First Acquisitions

The Society quickly began working toward the goals set out in Article II of their Constitution; the first acquisitions for the Society Library and Coin Cabinet occured in June and July 1878. At the June 28th meeting, "The President reported that he had recieved a copy of the Constitution and By-Laws of the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society and donated the same to the Society." At the same meeting the Secretary was instructed to "subscribe for one (1) year to the American Journal of Numismatics." A warrant in the amount of $2.00 was drawn to pay for the subscription. At the July 5th meeting it was resolved that "the Society purchase a proof set of 1878 (minus the 20c piece,) for Four Dollars and Fifty Cents ($4.50)..."

The Pittsburgh Exposition

The early history of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society is intimately connected with the Pittsburgh Exposition of 1878. WPNS members promoted their Society and the hobby of numismatics via a coin display at the Exposition, and they produced and sold the first WPNS medal in conjuction with the

exposition. Sadly, the Exposition was also the backdrop for a disagreement among the members, leading to the expulsion of one of its founding members.

The Pittsburgh Exposition Society was founded in 1875 for the purpose of promoting Pittsburgh products. Much like a World's Fair, several exhibition buildings were erected in Allegheny City. An advertisement in the June 22, 1878 Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette announced that the Exposition would be held from Tuesday, September 3rd through Saturday, October 5th of that year.

On July 5th, 1878 a committee consisting of Shipman, Rivett, & Morgan "was appointed to see what arrangement can be made with the Pittsburgh Exposition Society to place a collection of Coins on exhibition at their next Exhibition."

The Society's efforts were publicized nationally via an article appearing (belatedly) in the November 1878 issue of the Coin Collector's Journal.

> Pittsburgh posseses one of the most energetic numismatic societies that we know. Its members are interested in the science and desire to spread a knowledge of it all around, that the pleasure and profit they receive may be known by others. During the present year there is in Pittsburgh an exposition, and the society have wisely siezed the opportunity for awakening an interest in numismatics by placing on exhibition its collection of coins and medals. Thousands will thus learn that there are persons who take a pleasure in the study of coins, many of whom will catch the infection and be led in turn to become centres for awakening an interest in others. Many who know a little about coins, or who having by them a handful of old coppers as curiosities, will be led to looking into them, and may possibly find some rare coins in their little hoard. Such a result will certainly lead to a great increase in the membership of the society, and who knows but that some of these days the society will be showy enough to propose a Numismatic Loan Exhibition to which collectors might go from all parts of the land. We wish the society all success and wish that ts activity may never decrease.
>
> To commemorate this exhibition of their coins, a white metal die, by Geo. H. Lovett has been issued, having obverse a laurel wreath enclosing the words in three lines, FOUNDED JUNE 14TH, 1878, and outside, running all round, WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA NUMISMATIC SOCIETY, with PITTSBURGH, PA., in the exergue. On the obverse is a view of the Exposition building with PITTSBURGH EXPOSITION SOCIETY above and EXPOSITION of 1878 below.

On July 19 the committee reported "that they had secured the

exclusive right to sell the medals at 8%, and that they had paid the entrance fee of $5.00." No mention of medals is made earlier in the minutes, but obviously the subject had been discussed. Minutes of the next several meetings state only that the committee "reported progress."

An advertisement in the August 24th Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette reported that plans for the 1878 Pittsburgh Exposition were complete. "In addition to a vast display in the provinces of Art, Mechanics, Agriculture, Floriculture, Inventions, &c, There will be the following SPECIAL ATTRACTIONS, Which have been secured by the management without regard to expense:

"Dr. W. F. Carver, will exhibit his prodigious skill as a rifleman daily, illustrating his marvelous powers by breaking glass balls in the air, cutting coins, lead pencils &c., using a Winchester Rifle."

"The Great Automatic Wonder, the German's Dream, consisting of 40 moving and working figures has been secured, and will daily afford an endless fund of delight for old and young. "

"The Illuminator of the Future, Electric Lights, will be one of the novel and interesting features of the coming Exposition. The Floral Hall will lighted throughout every evening by this means and will add brilliance to every effect." (Thomas Edison's invention of the electric light bulb occured in 1877, just one year earlier).

The Exposition Caretaker Affair

On Monday evening, September 2nd (the night before the Exposition opening) the Society held a special meeting at the Exposition Building in Allegheny. Present were members Morgan, Maynard, McKnight, Clapp, Shipman, Rivett, Kirk, and Rode, "but owing to the lateness of the evening, no business was transacted."

On Wednesday evening, September 4th, another special meeting was held at the Exposition building. The members were present, execpt for Henry McKnight and John Rivett. The meeting had been called at the request of several members. Mr. Morgan stated the purpose of the meeting to be for the "election of a person to take charge of the collection of coins at the Exposition."

Mr. Morgan offered to attend to the collection and sell medals for $1.00 per day; and one half (1/2) of the net profit on all medals sold, after the first two thousand (2000)." The motion passed, and the Society voted to pay John Rivett $5.00 "for his services during the present week." The members also resolved to hold no regular meetings during the term of the Exposition.

On September 20th however, a special meeting was called to read the following letter:

> As Mr. John Rivett has committed an act unworthy of a gentleman by removing his coins and medals from the exposition, where the Society in common had their coins on exhibition, for the reason that the Society did not give him the position in charge of the coins, as they did not think him competent to take charge of and do the business of the Society desired; We, the undersigned members of the Society do hereby deem him unworthy of membership and will vote at the next meeting to expell him from the Society.

The letter was signed by Maynard, Clapp, Kirk, and Rode. The next Society meeting did not take place until October 11th, following the close of the Exposition. Mr. Rivett was duly expelled.

The 1878 Exposition Medal

E.F. Maynard ordered the medals from engraver George H. Lovett on behalf of the Society; he was later reimbursed $85.00 for the dies and planchets. Medals sold at the exposition were in white metal. The Carnegie Museum of Natural History owns a white metal specimen of the medal which has apparently been shot through with a bullet. Evidently this piece is evidence of Dr. Carver's sharpshooting talents.

It is not known how many were struck or how much they were sold for at the Exposition. However, total sales of $138.30 were reported on October 11th. The minutes also note that 22 medals were on hand at that time. If the medals were priced at 15 cents, then 922 were sold. If they were sold at just 5 cents, then 2,766 were sold. Morgan had requested a share of profits after the first 2,000 medals sold, but this was back at the beginning of the Exposition.

The Society resolved to sell the remaining 22 medals for the benefit of the Society at no less than 25 cents each. Also, "Mr. Maynard presented the Society with a silver exposition medal, for which the thanks of the Society were voted."

At the September 20th meeting the Secretary had been "instructed to present one of the Society's medals to the various Numismatic Societies; and also to Messrs. Scott & Co. and Geo. H. Lovett, Esq." At the October 18th meeting letters of thanks were read from the Boston Numismatic Society, the American Numismatic and Archaeological Society, and the Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia.

On October 25th the Secretary read a letter from Mr. Lovett offering "to strike Copper Exposition Medals for 20cts each,

and in Silver for $1.00 each." The Society resolved to make 25 copper medals, 15 brass, and 7 silver. This would make a total of at least 8 silver medals, since Maynard had already donated one to the Society Cabinet. It makes sense that only eight were struck altogether (one for the Society, and one for each of the founders, except Rivett).

The Society further resolved that the obverse die be cancelled after the above medals were struck. The medals were recieved by the Society by the November 15th meeting. On November 22nd a letter from Mr. Lovett was read, attesting to the number of medals struck. Secretary Rode reported that the obverse die had been cancelled.

The First New Members

The Society did not add its first new member until the last meeting of 1878. Five more members were added in quick succession, bringing the roster to thirteen by the end of January, 1879. The new recruits were as diverse as the founders. Their occupations were notary public, cigar manufacturer, hotel manager, clerk, and jeweler.

E. G. Comingo (December 27, 1878)

Edward. G. Comingo was listed as a notary public at 158 Fourth Avenue in the 1878 Pittsburgh city directory. He made his home at Forbes and Dithridge in the 14th Ward. Residing at the same address were Isabella Comingo (widow of Henry) and the Rev. Neville B.C. Comingo.

The July 17, 1878 Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette reported that Comingo's home had been burglarized the previous month.

> Wm Cella is charged before Alderman Reilly with breaking and entering into the house of E. G. Comingo, Esq. at Bellefield on the 29th ult., and feloniously appropriating a gold watch and other articles of jewelry to the value of $125. The accused was arrested and jailed for a hearing tomorrow.

Ferdinand Sermin (January 10, 1879)

A cigar manufacturer, Ferdinand Sermin was listed in the Pittsburgh city directory as early as 1860, doing business at 423 Liberty Avenue. In 1878 the directory lists his business as "cigars and tobacco" at 416 Forbes. Sermin was still active in his business as late as 1890, where he was listed at 496 Forbes. Working at the same address was Fred Sermin, a clerk (probably Ferdinand's son). Sermin was elected

Treasurer of WPNS in June 1883, and was re-elected to the position each following year through 1889.

W. R. Haslett (January 17, 1879)

Virtually nothing is known of William R. Haslett. There are three different W. Hazletts listed in the 1878 city directory. In 1890 there are two William R. Hasletts, one employed at the Pittsburgh Label Company.

J.E.H. Kelley (January 17, 1879)

J.E.H. Kelley was the manager of the Monongahela House hotel at Smithfield and Water streets by 1890. He was not listed in the 1878 city directories, but the 1880 Constitution lists his address as the Home Hotel, Duquesne Way. The Spetember, 1879 issue of Mason's Coin Collector's Herald lists Kelley as a subscriber, along with George Rode, Major C. P. Nichols, the "Western Numismatic Society", William Poillon, Robert Coulton Davis, R. W. Zabriskie, and 50 other pioneering numismatists.

Sidney F. Murphy (January 31, 1879)

In 1878 Sidney F. Murphy worked as a clerk at Tenth and Penn. In 1890 the city directory lists him as a bookkeeper working at 58 Sixth street. He made his home at the Haysville station of the P. F. W. & C. Ry (Pittsburgh, Fort Worth, and Cheasapeake Railway ??)

A. C. Gies (January 31, 1879)

A. Charles Gies was a jeweler and optician, who began collecting coins in 1864. He was not listed in the 1878 city directory, but appears in the 1890 directory at 52 Frankstown Ave. He later moved his business to 6260 Frankstown Avenue.

In a letter contained in the WPNS archives, he recalled the beginnings of his collection of "the war tokens and store cards of Pittsburgh." Gies stated that he "started to collect these momentoes of our Early Store Keepers when small change was very scarce. I knew where all these stores were. (I) was in some of them when I was a boy, and in after years got acquainted with some of those that issued these coins during the period of the Civil War, among which I mention Mr. Buffum." Gies had built a collection of 95 varieties of Pittsburgh Civil War store cards in copper, brass, white metal, nichel, and paper.

Gies was elected a trustee of the A.N.A. in 1904. He attended the Chapman's Stickney sale in Philadelphia (June 25-29, 1907), taking a trolley excursion to Fairmont Park one evening with Dr. Louis Comparette of the Philadelphia Mint, Virgil Brand, Ben Green, Thomas Elder, Edgar H. Adams, Farran Zerbe, and others. In September of that year Gies joined 27 fellow numismatists for the A.N.A. Convention in Columbus, Ohio. He is pictured in the front row of the official convention photograph, along with Heath, Zerbe, Green, Elder, and S.H. & H. Chapman. Gies brought with him an 1816 half dollar, which he sold at the convention.

It was reported in the October 1911 Numismatist that while on a trip through the Rocky Mountains Gies acquired an 1861 Parsons & Company $5.00 gold piece (only 4-6 pieces are known today).

Gies collected all U.S. coins, but specialized in half dollars, discovering many die varieties not listed in the standard reference of the day, the Haseltine Type Table catalogue.

As reported in The Numismatist, Gies attended the 1924 Cleveland A.N.A. convention, where he and fellow Pittsburghers (and WPNS members) Gottlieb Kraft and Perley W. Locker "were inseperable conventionites. They are a long-time friendly trio of rivals for die varieties of the early United States half dollars. What they did not have on public display they had to show in private. Based on their combined table of varieties, a new 'type table' is in order."

George Clapp, in a letter to the Society written July 2, 1938 (in response to a letter notifying Clapp of his nomination as an Honorary member) stated "this is an unexpected honor and while I am the only living "Charter Member" I feel that the honor should have gone to "Charlie" Gies, the man who has held the Society together, and done the <u>real work</u>, in doing so, these past sixty years."
At the time his half dollar collection was auctioned by Stack's in 1940, Gies was the oldest living collector in the United States.

Business As Usual

Society meetings continued uneventfully through January. The Society continued about its business of exhibiting and discussing coins at each meeting. Further additions were made to the Society Library and Coin Cabinet. George Rode donated a copy of the Director of the Mint's Report for 1878. Frank Kirk donated "a priced catalogue of his sale of Dec 30th 1878." (This is a mystery - John Adams does not list any auction catalog dated Dec 30th, 1878, although there is a Haseltine sale on Oct 30, 1878). On January 17th, 1879 the

Society elected to subscribe to the Coin Collector's Journal. On January 24th the Society voted to purchase a priced catalog of the Mickley sale.

On March 7th, attempting to fill the hole in its proof set, the Society resolved "to bid $4.50 on the 20 cent piece (lot 622) of 1878 in the sale of March 14th." (This probably refers to the S. K. Harzfeld sale held on that date. A copy exists in the Carnegie Library collection). Mr. Kelley placed the bid on the Society's behalf. On March 21st, Secretary Rode reported that the lot had been won at the price of $4.25.

On May 23rd, the Society voted "to bid $9.00 on Crosby's Early Coins of America, to be sold at auction in Harzfeld's sale of June 5th and 6th." President Morgan reported at the June 13th meeting that the bid had not been successful. On July 2nd Secretary Rode was authorized to purchase a copy of Crosby for $9.00. On July 11th a warrant for $9.30 was drawn to pay for it (this amount apparently included postage). "The Curator was instructed to have the above copy of Crosby Early Coins of America bound."

The Notorious Jonas Adler and the Black Ball Rule

On February 21st, 1879, Mr. Jonas Adler was proposed as a member of the Society. Adler was a part-time coin dealer who would later catalog an auction sale at the D.F. Henry auction house on April 30, 1879.

"The President appointed Mr. J.E.H. Kelley as teller - a vote then being taken and Mr. Kelley announced that more than three (3) votes had been cast in the negative." Members Morgan, McKnight, Kelley, Gies, Sermin, Shipman, Kirk, Comingo, and Rode were present. Article VII of the Society Bylaws states that three negative votes shall prevent the election of a prospective member.

Apparently Mr. Adler had already developed a reputation for himself. His coin sale of April 1879 would be his first and last auction. Ed Frossard wrote in the July 1879 issue of Numisma:

> Dealers sending coins on approval to Mr. Jonas Adler, Pittsburgh, PA., will do well, if they wish to assure a safe delivery, to address the distinguished coin dealer in care of one of the Town Justices, or of the Sheriff of the County.

The September 1879 issue of Mason's Coin Collectors' Herald included an open letter to Adler:

> You seem to be doing a wholesale coin business on credit; but in reply to your many solicitations we say patronize those who give 30 days and send us cash at half price you pay on credit. Perhaps the credit system pays you best.

The November 1884 issue of Numisma states:

> Jonas Adler, Pittsburgh, PA., has been rusticating at Claremont Springs, at municipal expenses for swindling a Fifth Ave., cigar dealer in a transaction of old coins. A.A.A. No. 1, first-class prefered petty swindler. Coin collectors, beware of Jonas!

The Ramsden Matter

Another debate over membership began on March 21st, when Thomas Ramsden was proposed for membership. Ramsden was probably in middle age, having been listed in the 1860 Pittsbugh City directory as a gas fitter, living on Federal Street near Lacock in Allegheny City. The 1878 directory listed him as a plumber. No action on Ramsden's membership application was taken at that meeting.

At the following meeting (March 28, 1879) a committee consisting of Kirk, Shipman, and Gies was appointed "to report on the advisability of admitting Mr. T. Ramsden as a member." On April 18th the committee "reported adversely." Still, no action on Ramsden membership application was taken, although Albert Glockner was elected at the same meeting.

During the same time period the name of J. R. Bingler was proposed and later withdrawn (by Mr. Sermin).

More New Faces

Despite the problems with other proposed members, the second quarter of 1879 saw four men added to the membership rolls. This batch included a liquor dealer, another clerk, and another coin dealer.

Albert Glockner, Jr. (April 18, 1879)

Albert Glockner Jr. was a liquor dealer, operating at 32 Sixth Street. Glockner apparently inherited the family business from his father (Albert Sr.) and uncle Leopold, who were listed in the 1860 Pittsburgh City Directory as A. Glockner & Bro., wholesale importers of wines and liquor at 32 St.

Clair Street. (this is the same address - the name of the street was changed in the meantime).

A. J. Rogers (May 2, 1879)

A. J. Rodgers was listed as a clerk at 169 Irwin Avenue, Alllegheny, in the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory. An Alfred J. Rodgers, also a clerk (for the Union Line) was listed in the 1890 directory. It is not known whether Alfred is the A. J. Rogers who belonged to WPNS. Rodgers acted as an agent for buyers at Morgan's auction sales. His name is listed on the covers of the 10/16/1879 and 12/23/1879 sale catalogs.

Robert D. Book (May 16, 1879)

The 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory lists Book's occupation as coin dealer, at 71 Beech Avenue, Allegheny. By 1890 he is listed as a teller for the First National Bank, living at 5 Lincoln Avenue in Allegheny.

David J. White (June 13, 1879)

Nothing is yet known of David J. White. There are four David Whites listed in the 1878 Directory. One is an engineer, but there is know way of knowning which White belonged to WPNS.

The Rogers/Shipman Affair

On May 23rd, just three weeks after his election as a member, A. J. Rogers submitted a letter "preferring charges against Mr. R. W. Shipman." At the following meeting Mr. Comingo offered the following resolution, which after a long debate, was adopted:

> Whereas, by a letter presented in open meeting of this Society on May 23rd, 1879, Mr. A. J. Rogers preferred certain charges against Mr. R. W. Shipman; both of whom being members of this Society; and
>
> Whereas, the acts charges are not denied by Mr. Shipman in any material point, either in matter or form; and
>
> Whereas, said R. W. Shipman refuses to make any adequate settlement of this matter, or to submit the same to be arbitrated by this Society or by a commitee selected impartially by its members; and
>
> Whereas, the charges being swindling and other conduct unbecoming a gentleman or member of this Society, therefore

> Resolved, that if said R. W. Shipman persists in his determination to refuse to arrange this matter with Mr. Rogers, to his satisfaction, or submit it to arbitration in this Society, that his name be stricken from the roll of the members at its next regular meeting.

At the following meeting, however (June 13th) it was resolved "to take no action in the Shipman affair until some future meeting. Both Shipman and Rogers continued to attend subsequent meetings. No further action on the matter was ever taken, and Rogers resigned his membership in the Society on March 19, 1880.

Summer, 1879

The third quarter of 1879 saw three new members added to the rolls: the controversial plumber, a manufacturer, and a railroad superintendent.

Thomas Ramsden (July 25, 1879)

The outstanding matter of the membership of Thomas Ramsden was finally resolved at the July 25th meeting, four months after the plumber was first proposed for membership. Secretary Rode read a letter from Ramsden regarding his membership application. Robert Book was appointed teller, and a vote was taken. The vote was eight to two in favor of admission. Members Morgan, Maynard, Kelley, Book, Gies, Glockner, McKnight, Shipman, White, and Rode were in attendance.

(Since Shipman and Gies were the only members of the committee which recommeded against Mr. Ramsden, it is likely that these two gentlemen represented the dissenting votes. Of course, we will probably never know for sure). Shipman, Ramsden, and Gies were all present at the following meeting on August 1st.

Henry A. Breed (August 22, 1879)

Henry A. Breed was listed in the the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory as the president and treasurer of the Culmer Spring Company at 26th and Liberty. He made his home at Fifth Avenue and Neville Streets, in Oakland. By 1890 he had become a real estate and insurance agent at 516 Market Street. He still resided at the same address.

Jesse Hildebrand (August 29, 1879)

In 1860 Jesse Hildebrand worked as a paper carrier, living at the corner of Hamilton and Sedgwick in Allegheny. At the same address lived Solomon Hildebrand, a mill wright (apparently

Jesse's father). By 1878 Jesse had become a superintendant at the "P & A Pass Ry" (?? Passenger Railway), living on Shady Avenue in Allegheny. He was still listed as a superintendant in 1890, living at 163 High Street in Allegheny.

The 1879 Exposition Ultimatum

At the June 6, 1879 meeting a new committee, consisting of members Kelley, Book, Kirk, and Morgan was appointed to begin the process of applying for exhibit space at the 1879 Pittsburgh Exposition. The committee reported progress at future meetings, but no details were recorded in the minutes.

On July 6th the committee reported that exhibit space could be reserved for $5.00, and that the Exposition Society would provide six entrance tickets for Society members. At the following meeting the committee was instructed to apply for the exhibit space, but only if all Society members were provided with "a season ticket for the exposition." On July 11th the committee reported that the best offer they could get from the Exposition Society was for eight tickets. The other eight Society members would have to purchase their tiuckets. The Society stuck to its guns; Mr. Maynard was instructed to tell the Exposition Society that nothing less than tickets for all members would be acceptable. On July 25th Maynard reported back that the Exposition Society had give in to the WPNS demand: all members would be given free tickets.

The 1879 Exposition Coin Exhibit

At the July 25, 1879 meeting a committee "to make arrangements to place a collection of coins on exhibition at the coming Exposition" was appointed. The committee included members Kelley, Book, Kirk, Morgan, Maynard, Rode, and Shipman. At the following meeting (August 1st) a resolution was passed assessing each member of the Society $5.00 "to meet the expenses incurred in making the display at the Exposition - $2.50 to be paid now, and the balance when required by the committee."

A letter written by R. W. Shipman on July 28th was published (belatedly) in the September 1879 issue of Mason's Coin Collector's Herald.

> Dear Sirs: - The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society will make a numismatic display at the coming Pittsburgh Exposition valued at $8,000, with one of more of our members in constant attendance. Our object is to foster and increase the interest in the science. The Society

will sell a medal size 22 (by Lovett,) commemorating the event. The entire collection will be catalogued in good style, and distributed to the extent of 2,000 copies to our patrons. A limited number of Coin dealer's advertisements will be recieved, to assist in covering expenses, at the following low rates: One page, $8.00; half page, $5.00; quarter page, $3.00. Reaching as it will a large number of amature collectors who will never see a coin paper, its advantage as an advertising meduim will be apparent. Hoping you will favor us with an insertion of this letter, I remain, respectfully yours,

R. W. Shipman, Sec. Finance Committee,
79 Wilkins Street, Allegheny City, PA

(We call the attention of all Coin dealers to this grand opportunity for increasing their sales in the West. -- Editor).

On August 22nd Mr. Morgan was again "elected to take charge of the display at the Exposition," being paid $1.00 per day. Morgan and Rogers were appointed a committee "to arrange the coins for the Exposition." It is not clear how the duties of the smaller committee of Morgan and Rogers differed from the duties of the larger July 25th committee. Perhaps the larger group contributed items from their collections for the exhibit, and Morgan and Rogers handled the actual setting up of the exhibit.

It is not known if the exhibit catalogue described by Shipman was ever produced. No copy has been found in the Society archives, nor has it been referenced by writers on numismatic literature. There is no explicit record of payment for printing costs during this period.

As they had done in 1878, the Society held a special meeting at the Exposition building on September 3rd, 1879. It was again decided to hold no regular meetings of the Society during the course of the Exposition. Present that night were members Morgan, Kirk, Maynard, Kelley, Book, Gies, Glockner, McKnight, Ramsden, Rogers, Sermin, and Rode.

The 1879 Exposition Medal

The 1879 version of the Exposition medal was recieved by the August 29th, 1879 meeting. It was resolved to send "one of our medals to each of the following:

U.S. Mint, Philadelphia
The American Numismatic and Archeaological Society, NY
The Numismatic and Antiquarian Society of Philadelphia
Vermont Numismatic Society
Boston Numismatic Society
S. K. Harzfeld, Esq, Philadelphia
American Journal of Numismatics, Boston

Coin Collector's Journal, Scott & Co., NY
Numisma, Ed Frosard, Irvington, NY
Coin Collector's Herald, Mason & Co., Philadelphia
Pittsburgh Commercial Gazette
Pittsburgh Evening Leader
Pittsburgh Evening Telegraph
The Allegheny Mail

Letters ackowledging the gift of the medals were sent by most of the recipients. The letters were read by Secretary Rode at the first meeting following the Exposition (October 17, 1879). J.W. Scott chose to pan the efforts of the Society in the November 1879 issue of his Coin Collector's Journal.

> The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society have issued a white metal medal for the Pittsburgh Exposition, which is similar in many respects to that issued in 1878; on the obverse is a view of the Exposition building. The design is not what we should expect from the numismatically educated members of the Pittsburgh Society; as such an engraving is of an age long since past, the collector's of to-day see so many beautiful medals that an inferior work is but little treasured.

At the end of the Exposition the Society had 113 medals in white metal on hand. It is not known how many were produced. At the October 17th meeting the Society resolved to "order 25 Copper and 25 Brass medals, and a number of Silver medals equal in number to those members who subscribe for them" At the following meeting (October 24th) it was decided to purchase a silver medal for the Society cabinet. In all, 17 silver medals were made. The medals were recieved from Mr. Lovett by December 19th, and were sold at the following prices: $1.00 for the silver medals, $.25 for the copper and brass medals (for members admitted prior to October 1st, 1879), and $.50 for members admitted thereafter. At the January 16, 1880 meetiong it was decided to sell the remaining 1879 white metal medals for $.20 each.

The October 24th meeting was eventful in other respects. Three new members were added to the rolls, presumably having been recruited through the Pittsburgh Exposition. A committee consisting of Marnard, Morgan, and Kelly was appointed to frame a new Constitution. Also, a motion regarding the 1879 medals was passed which would later lead to further controversy:

> On Motion, it was resolved, that the medals of 1879 in Silver, Copper, and Brass shall not be transfered to any person who is not a member of the Society.

Fall, 1879

The fall crop of new members included a publisher, a painter, a clerk, and a music agent.

B. B. Coursin (October 24, 1879)

Little is known of B. B. Coursin. He resided in McKeesport, and this probably accounts for his absence from the Pittsburgh City Directories. His collection was sold at auction by Ed Frossard on September 21, 1883. The collection consisted of Large Cents, Proofs, early silver, and Literature.

J. S. Murray (October 24, 1879)

While there are several "J. Murray" entries in the Pittsburgh City Directories, it is likely that the one who joined WPNS was John S. Murray, proprietor of the Legal Journal, who resided at 65 River Avenue in Allegheny. He published the Journal as late as 1890, when his office was listed at 409 Grant Street. The Pittsburgh Legal Journal is being published today from a Grant Street address, although it is not known if the two publications are connected.

C. W. Kirk (October 24, 1879)

Little is known about C.W. Kirk. He may be a family member of Frank Kirk, the painter. There is a Chas. Kirk listed as a painter in the 1878 City Directory, on Bedford Avenue. In 1890 C. W. Kirk is listed as a grocer at 259 Fifth Avenue. Kirk later became a charter member of the American Numismatic Association (member number 44).

J. C. Cotton (November 7, 1879)

J. C. Cotton is listed as a receiver at 49 Sedgwick in Allegheny. He apparently lived there with a large family. Residing at the same address were Emmett E. Cotton, an attorney, and C.M. and John W. Cotton, both laborers. By 1890 C.W. Cotton is listed as a superintendent at the "P. A. & M. Pass Ry" This may be the same company Jesse Hildebrand worked for in 1878.

W. L. Buettler (November 14, 1879)

William L. Buetler is listed in the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory as a music agent at 241 Webset. His name is spelled with just one "t", although this may be a typo. There are no other W.L. Buettlers listed.

Benjamin T. Schmauk (January 16, 1880)

Nothing is known about Schmauk; he is not listed in the Pittsburgh City Directories reviewed so far.

The New Constitution

A special meeting to discuss the new constitution was held on November 17, 1879. The new constitution was largely the same as the original constitution, with some additions and minor changes. One new feature was contained in Article V: "the Society shall possess a Medal, and a Certificate of Membership." Explicit procedures for amending the Constitution and nominating new members were spelled out. In addition, Resident, Corresponding, and Honorary Membership classifications were established.

At the following meeting (November 21st) a new set of Bylaws was presented. The number of members required for a quorum was raised from five to seven. The initiation fee was raised from $1.00 to $5.00, and the dues were reduced to $4.00 a year, payable quarterly, in advance). The previous Bylaws had called for the collection of $.25 per week, which could amount to over $10.00 in the course of a year. The new Bylaws also stated that "the names of the eight (8) founders of this Society, and of the Honorary members, (whether living or dead,) shall be published in every printed list of the members of this Society."

The new Constitution and Bylaws were adopted, and the Committee was discharged. At the following meeting (November 28th) it was decided that dues would commence under the new structure beginning on the 1st of January, 1880.

At the February 6th, 1880 meeting "it was resolved to have 150 copies of the Constitution printed and that 25 of these be bound in Muslin." The twelve-page pamphlet was titled Constitution and By-Laws of the Western Penna. Numismatic Society. It was printed by W.W. Lewis & Co., 48 Fifth Avenue (across the street from George Rode's office) at a total cost of $10.50 (paid on March 5th, 1880).

The pamphlets were available by the February 27th, 1880 meeting, where it was resolved that each member be given two copies. The ANS Library has a copy of the pamphlet, inscribed "from Geo. W. Rode, Secy, May 21/80."
A copy of the pamphlet was also sent to J.W. Scott, who

printed in his July 1880 Coin Collector's Journal:

> We acknowledge the receipt of a copy of the "Constitution and By-Laws of the Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society," of Pittsburgh. From the list of resident members they appear to be more alive to the interest of their new society than are those of the more antiquated association of this city. By way of wishing them success, we would warn them never to permit a numismatic spider (or dealer) induce them to make their headquarters in his webbed parlors, or the unwary flies may rue it; vide Am. Num. and Arch. Soc. of N.Y.

The Library Rules

At the same meeting that the new Constitution was adopted (November 28, 1879), curator Kelley presented a set of rules pertaining to the borrowing of items from the Society Library and Cabinet. At the following meeting (December 5, 1879) the rules "were adopted and ordered to be printed." These printed rules were apparently then affixed to the inside covers of books and catalogues in the Society library.

I. Books &c., will be delivered at the regular meetings at 8 o'clock, P.M. (to members in alphabetical order.) If a member is not present when his name is called, the choice will be given to the next in order.

II. Members are entitled to Books &c., for one (1) week; a fine of ten cents per week will be charged if retained longer than that time.

III. Any member losing Books &c., will be charged the original price of the same, or will be required to replace the same, as the Society may direct.

The Membership Medal

At the December 14, 1879 meeting, "it was resolved that a committee of three (3) be appointed to prepare designs for a medal of membership. The chair named Mess. Rode, Kelley, and Gies." The committee reported progress at subsequent meetings, but no details were recorded in the minutes. The committee prepared a report presented at the February 6th, 1880 meeting. The report has not been found in the Society archives, but the committee was authorized to have the medals struck. At the following meeting (February 13th) it was decided to strike the medals only in silver.

1880: Tough Times

The year 1880 was largely uneventful. The meetings continued

weekly as scheduled, with relatively little Society business recorded in the minutes. In some sense, the Society had come of age: its Constitution adopted and printed, its Library and Cabinet under construction, two important exhibitions mounted, two official medals produced, and plans for a membership medal underway. It had survived its formative stage, and despite disagreements among members had managed to grow into a mature and respected numismatic Society of national stature.

Still, the disagreements had taken their toll, and perhaps the youthful enthusiasm of a new organization had given way to the comfort and weariness of middle age. 1880 and subsequent years were notable more for the absence of many of the activities and events that marked the Society's hectic first two years. Tellingly, the Society's planned Membership medal would never be struck.

The Society's changes began early in 1880, beginning with the need to find a new location to hold the meetings. On April 30, 1880 it was decided to hold the meetings at the Home Hotel, Duquesne Way (Mr. Kelley's place of business) until further notice. J.C. Cotton inquired about the use of his brother E.E. Cotton's office at 91 Diamond Street. On June 18th (in the absence of J.C. Cotton), Curator Kelley reported that E.E. Cotton's office could be rented for $.50 a meeting. He also offered the use of rooms in his Hotel free of charge. "On Motion, the report was recieved and filed, and a vote of thanks tendered Mr. Kelley - the committee was then discharged.

On October 29th, George Rode resigned his position as Secretary "owing to want of time to properly attend the office." Owing to the want of a volunteer to fill the position, Rode continued taking the minutes as usual.

In addition to losing its original meeting place, the Society lost several members in 1880: Rogers, Murray, Comingo, Cotton, White, and founder F. J. Kirk all resigned at various times. The Society would not add a new Resident member for another five years. A quorum not being present, several meetings could not be held. In the face of declining attendance, the Society voted on November 19, 1880 to reduce the frequency of meetings to two per month. "Article I of the By-Laws was amended to read The regular meetings shall be held on the first and third Friday's of every month at 8 P.M."

First Corresponding Members

Facing a dearth of new resident members, the Society began filling its rolls with Corresponding members.

William Poillon (June 18, 1880)

William Poillon was a steadfast member of the American Numismatic and Archeological Society of New York. He and a small band of fellow numismatists had held the organization together through a period of low interest before 1873. Being named the Society's recording secretary in that year, Poillon kept the books in superlative shape. Poillon's coins were sold by Ed Frossard on December 12, 1883 and October 10, 1893, by Lyman Low on January 26, 1904, and by Thomas Elder on January 6, 1918.

W. E. Woodward (July 16, 1880)

William Elliot Woodward was an apothecary from Roxbury, MA, near Boston. He had moved to that city in 1848. He entered the coin trade in 1860, issuing 110 auction catalogs by 1890.

Thomas Cunningham (November 19, 1880)

Thomas Cunningham of Mohawk, NY, was a noted collector of Fractional Currency. He was a neighbor and personal friend of General Francis Ellis Spinner, Treasurer of the U.S. from 1861 to 1875. Matt Rothert called Spinner "the Father of United States Postage and Fractional Currency." Being a collector well positioned to obtain first-hand information on the series, Cunningham published the first comprehensive listing of Fractional Currency in an 1893 issue of the American Journal of Numismatics. Cunningham's collection included the unique original paste-up patterns created by Spinner as models for the first issue of postage currency in 1862. Cunningham's collection later passed into the famous Herman Crofoot collection.

G.P. Nichols (March 4, 1881)

Nothing is known about G.P. Nichols, other than his hometown of Springfield, Massachusetts.

1881

The year 1881 opening with the Society still in search of a new meeting location. On February 4th, "Mr. Wooddridge's offer to let the Society have his office for their meetings at $5.00 per quarter year was accepted."

The Society lost more members during the year. Benjamin T. Schmauk sent in a letter of resignation, but this was not accepted since he owed back dues. Henry Breed resigned on June 17, 1881. At the same meeting it was decided to meet only on the first Friday of the month during July and August.

Seven members attended the July meeting, but only six appeared at the following four meetings. No quorum being reached, no business was conducted. Active members during this period were only Book, Gies, Kelley, McKnight, Morgan, Ramsden, Rode, and Shipman.

In September, President Morgan moved out of town. On October 21st, the By-Laws were further amended again, this time returning the frequency of meetings to weekly. Apparently the members hoped that this would invigorate interest in the Society, but it was not to be. A quorum could not be reached at the next five meetings. On November 11th, only Ramsden, Gies, and Rode appeared.

1882

On January 13th, 1882 the membership voted to reduce the initiation fee to $3.00, over Mr. Ramsden's objection. Ramsden introduced a motion to repeal the reduction at the January 27th meeting, but was overruled.

On February 10th, the office of the President was declared vacant. Morgan had moved to Louisville, and had been suspended on January 6th for nonpayment of dues. At an election on February 24th, Thomas Ramsden was elected President.

Morgan's Expulsion

At the April 7th, 1881 meeting (Ramsden, Gies, Book, Shipman, and Rode present) the Society severed its ties with founder Morgan completely:

> Resolved that Mr. S. H. Morgan, (ex president) be expelled for non-payment of dues, and that a vote of censure be passed for gross breach of faith to this society in offering for sale, at public auction, the Society's Medals of 1879 in Silver, Copper, and Brass which were issued with the express condition that they should never be transferred to any person who is not a member of this Society.
>
> Resolved, that the various numismatic journals be requested to publish this part of the minutes of the meeting.

Morgan had been present on October 24, 1879 when the resolution regarding the medals was passed, so he was certainly aware of the odd restriction.

On April 28th Ramsden appointed a committee of three (Book,

Gies, and McKnight) to carry out the resolution. On May 19th the committee reported that they had sent copies of the Society's resolution to the American Journal of Numismatics, Numisma, and the Coin Collector's Journal.

As of the September 1, 1882 meeting, none of the publications contacted had published the resolution. Secretary Rode was instructed to write to the editors to find out why nothing had appeared. Correspondence from three of the publications was read at the October 6th meeting, but has not been located in the Society archives.

Further Decline

On May 19th, 1882, the Membership Medal committee was officially dissolved. "This committee reported that at the time of appointment they could not agree upon a design that was satisfactory to all the members, and that since that time, they did not deem it advisable to prepare designs and have the dies cut owing to the decreasing membership in the Society."

On June 16th, 1882 the Society officially expelled six members who had been suspended for some time due to nonpayment of dues: Buettler, Haslett, C.W. Kirk, Murphy, Schmauk, and Sermin.

Murphy sent a letter (read at the June 30, 1882 meeting) declining to resume his membership, and offered his coin collection for sale. "The Secretary was instructed to thank Mr. Murphy for his offer to sell his collection to the Society, and inform him that we do not desire to purchase them at this time."

On October 1, 1882, the resignation of founder George Clapp was accepted. Out of the eighteen scheduled meetings held between September 1 and December 29, 1882, only five had a quorum. On two occasions, only one member besides President Ramsden showed up. On December 29th, the members voted another change to the Bylaws: the meeting would be held just once a month, on the first Friday at 8 P.M. The Society attempted to hold weekly meetings for the first part of 1883, but with little success. On May 11th the Society voted to put the new meeting schedule into effect as of July 1, 1883, with the meetings to be held at the residence of a member.

Meetings were held in August, September, and December 1883. It was not until June 7th, 1884 that the Society would again have a quorum. At that meeting members Maynard, Book, Shipman, and Glockner were expelled for nonpayment of dues (however, Book would be renominated and re-elected as a member on September 5th). The By-Laws were once again amended, reducing a quorum to three members.

New Recruits

On July 3, 1885, the Society's first new members in five years were proposed. Ferdinand Sermin recommended Charles Shinkle and H.E. Wilson for Resident membership, while George Rode proposed Lyman H. Low for Corresponding membership. With McKnight and Gies acting as tellers, the three were unanimously elected to membership at the following meeting.

Charles H. Shinkle (August 7, 1885)

In 1878 Charles H. Shinkle was a bookkeeper at Wilcox, Shinkle & Miller, "founders and machinists, grist and saw mill machinery a specialty." The company was located at 39 Water Street in Pittsburgh. Shinkle's partners were John F. Wilcox and William J. Miller, Jr. He made his home at 129 River Avenue in Allegheny. By 1890 Shinkle had gone into a partnership with Edwin A. Myers, forming Myers, Shinkle & Company at 523 Wood Street. By this time Shinkle made his home at Forbes and Craig Streets, in Oakland.

By 1905 Shinkle was president of "The Myers & Shinkle Co., Commercial Stationers, Printers & Binders," at 711 Liberty Street. In that year he combined his business and hobby interests when he first published his booklet "U.S. Coin Values and Lists." The card-covered volume was a forerunner of today's "Redbook", listing values for all regular issue U.S. coins in neat tabular format. The "lists" referred to in the title included "Years in which the coinage was small," "Prices some of the rarities have brought in recent years," "The gold mint marks," and "List of private gold issues." The latter was illustrated by 38 photos "taken from specimens in Cabinet of John A. Beck, Esq., Pittsburgh, PA," produced by Philadelphia dealer Henry Chapman. The inside back cover held a list of the names and addresses of coin dealers from across the nation.

In 1913 Shinkle ran unopposed for the office of 2nd Vice President of the A.N.A., serving under President Frank Duffield.

H.E. Wilson (August 7, 1885)

Nothing is known of H.E. Wilson, not even his full name. There are four H. Wilsons listed in the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory, and many more in the 1890 directory.

Lyman H. Low (August 7, 1885)

Born in Boston in 1844, Lyman Haines Low served in the Civil War, sold dry goods for many years thereafter, and in 1883,

entered the coin business, issuing his first fixed price list from New York City. When he joined WPNS he was still early in his career as a coin dealer. He wrote a standard text on Hard Times Tokens in 1886, and served as co-editor of The American Journal of Numismatics from 1891 to 1907. Ultimately Low would issue 212 price lists and auction sales, the last shortly before his death in 1924.

Monthly Coin Sales Plan

At the same meeting, flush with their success in finally adding some new members, the Soiety appointed a committee of three (Rode, McKnight, and Shinkle) was appointed "to report on the advisability of having a series of monthly coin sales." On October 2nd the committee reported favorably, and further proposed a set of rules for such sales. The Society would earn a commission of 10% on coins selling under $5.00, and 5% for coins selling for $5.00 or more. The funds would be used to purchase coins for the Society Cabinet. At the following meeting (November 6th) Henry McKnight was elected the first "Clerk for the Coin Sales." No sales are ever recorded as being held. The office of Clerk of Coin sales was expressly left vacant after the June 3, 1887 election of officers.

1886

G. W. Scott (May 7, 1886)

On April 2nd Henry McKnight proposed G. W. Scott for membership. At the following meeting (May 7th) Scott was unanimously elected. By October 1st however, Scott "not having filed his acceptence of Resident Membership his election was declared void." There is a George W. Scott listed as an engineer at 2610 Caray Avenue in the 1878 Pittsburgh City Directory. The Society later had a change of heart and rescinded its earlier voiding of his election, giving Scott another chance to sign up. By the end of the year, he had paid his initiation fee. But on May 4, 1888, his election was declared void again, Scott never having sent a letter of acceptance or attended a meeting.

A Close Brush with Death

The Society came close to closing its doors in 1886. At the October 1st meeting "it was resolved to hold a special meeting on Friday, October 15th to decide upon the question of continuing or dissolving the Society." The meeting was held at The Monongehela House. Eight members were present: Ramsden, Kelley, Shinkle, Sermin, McKnight, Gies, Book, and Rode.

> After the subject had been fully discussed it was moved that we continue the Society. A vote being taken, it resulted - Yeas 3, Nays 3 - being a tie vote the President voted nay and declared the motion lost. The President then announced that it required the consent of all members to disband the Society and as the above showed this had not been obtained the Society would be continued as heretofore.

The Curator reported at the next meeting (November 5th) that the Society's Library consisted of "15 bound volumes, 292 catalogues, and 150 unbound periodicals. The Cabinet contains 111 medals & coins, 3 dies for medals, and 17-1878 + 111-1879 Society's medals."

On display at that meeting was the Society's 1886 Proof set. In December, George Rode displayed an example of Nicholas Veeder's proposed "co-metallic currency."

The Recruitment Circular

In a sign of new vigor, the Society voted to renew its subscription to the American Journal of Numismatics. In addition, a committee of four (McKnight, Book, Rode, and Shinkle) was appointed "to issue a circular inviting all collectors to join our Society." At the December meeting the committee reported that the circulars had been printed, but were not yet mailed. By February, 1887 they had all been mailed. By March, two replies were recieved, from W. B. Evans and Thomas Harper.

W. B. Evans

Nothing is known of W. B. Evans.

Thomas Harper

Harper was present as a guest at the March 3, 1887 meeting, where he read an article on "Primitive and Prehistoric Money in America." This is the first recorded prepared presentation ever at a WPNS meeting.

1887 & 1888: Further Slide

1887 was not to be a good year, however. Evans and Harper were never admitted to membership. Book, Kelley, and Shinkle were suspended for non-payment of dues. Finally, at the January 1888 meeting, Book and Shinkle were expelled.

In February 1888, and again in April, Ramsden and Rode were

the only members to show up for the meeting (although in April, Henry McKnight arrived late).

On March 2, 1888, J.E.H. Kelley was notified "to replace the catalogues &c. charged against him, as required by the rules relating to the Library. It was resolved to have 1000 copies of the Library rules printed." At the May 4th meeting a letter from Kelley regarding the catalogues was read, and "it was resolved that Mr. Kelley be given til next meeting to replace them."

At the June meeting, Curator McKnight reported that he had notified Kelley about the cataloges, but had recieved no reply. It was then resolved "that Mr. J.E.H. Kelley be suspended till the next regular meeting, and if nothing is heard from him by that time, the Curator is hereby directed to bring charges against him with a view to his expulsion from the Society." In July a letter from Kelley was read, requesting the Society to purchase replacements for the missing catalogs and to send him the bill. In April, 1888 Kelley was sent a bill for $2.67.

Library Additions

In August, 1888 the Society authorized the purchase of a lot of 453 priced catalogues from Charles Steigerwalt. However, the lot was previously sold. In September a copy of Attinelli's "Numisgraphics" was purchased for $1.25. The Library Committee was authorized to bid on a number of books offered in Woodward's 101st sale. On December 7, 1888 the Society ordered a plated copy of the Robert Coulton Davis collection, and purchased a copy of Snowden's "Mint Manual" for $2.00.

Final Curtain

By June 7, 1889 however, the membership had decided that it was again time to consider the question of continuing the Society. At the time there were only six active members. After re-electing the current slate of officers, the Society resolved "that a vote on the question of continuing or dissolving the Society be taken at our next meeting, and that the Secretary notify each member of this resolution. At the following meeting (July 5th) it was resolved "that the Society proceed to dispose of its property with a view to dissolving." A committee of Rode, McKnight, and Gies was appointed to catalog the property of the Society for an auction to be held among its remaining members.

In August the committee reported that it had cataloged the Library, and recommended dividing the remaining 1878 and 1879 medals equally among the members, with any extra pieces to be

placed in the sale.

Meanwhile, Kelley's check for $2.67 had been recieved, but there were still two catalogues missing and charged to him. The Society sent Kelley a second bill, resolving on September 6th to expell him if the second bill were not paid. Kelley's check had arrived by the October meeting, and the expulsion motion was set aside.

The final arrangements for the dissolution of the Society were made at the October 4, 1889 meeting. Present were the six active members, Ramsden, Sermin, McKnight, Wilson, Gies, and Rode.

> On motion, it was resolved that the Society's property be sold, at auction among the members, on Thursday evening, October 24th at 7 o'clock P.M. and following evenings until all disposed of, at the office of the Curator; sale to be adjourned if any member, through sickness or absence from the City, is unable to be present.

The group assembled at the appointed hour at Curator McKnight's office. Although Mr. Wilson was not present, the sale went ahead as scheduled.

> Mr. McKnight was elected as Auctioneer, and Mr. Rode as Clerk. The sale then took place as per the Catalogue, 324 lots being disposed of, when, owing to the lateness of the hour, it was agreed to adjourn the sale until Friday, Nov. 1st at 7 o'clock.

The group reconvened as scheduled, with all six members present. The remainder of the property was auctioned. The entire 481-lot sale realized a total of $184.06 for the Society. At 8 P.M. that evening, the group held an official Society meeting. They decided that the remaining copies of the 1880 Constitution and By-Laws be divided among the remaining members, and that each member be allocated a credit toward their auction bill equal to their portion of the assets of the Society. Mr. Ramsden then offered to host the next meeting at his residence.

On December 6, 1889, the members gathered at the home of President Ramsden. All were present except Mr. White. It was to be the Society's last meeting for twenty years. After resolving amounts owed to the Curator and Secretary for postage and other expenses, the Society's books were then audited. $41.47 was distributed to each of the remaining members.

Secretary Rode's last entry in the minute book reads as follows:

> The foregoing minutes having been read and approved, a vote of thanks was tendered Mr. Ramsden for his courtesy in exhibiting his magnificent collection of Coins and Medals. The consent of all the members having been obtained, a motion was made to now dissolve the Society which was carried unanimously.

The Western Pennsylvania Numismatic Society was temporarily gone, but was never forgotten. In a letter written to the Society in 1939, Thomas W. Voetter stated:

> Personally, I have often regretted that I did not identify myself with your organization when I was living in Pittsburgh. It seems that its existence was not brought to my attention. I was just a beginner in collecting and did not then know of the advantages of membership and did not have the initiative to find out about it for myself.
>
> Some of my most pleasant memories, in the numismatic way, are of some of the older members and founders of your society. It was Mr. John Rivett who first opened my eyes to the possibility of obtaining coins other than from circulation or accident, and Mr. Rode was so enthusiastic and imparted his enthusiasm about collecting in such a manner that it was very helpful to me. I also met Mr. Ramsden and obtained a few specimens from him which I still have. At the 1892 Convention I also met others of your early members. Mr. Gies was also another who kept my interest in coins alive. A short time ago I ran across a minor proof set which he furnished me ever so many years ago.

OFFICERS

DATE	PRES	VP	SEC	TREAS	CURATOR	CLERK
6/14/1878	Morgan	Kirk,F.J.	Rode	Maynard	-	
6/28/1878	Morgan	Kirk,F.J.	Rode	Maynard	-	
					Clapp	
4/11/1879					Comingo	
6/20/1879	Morgan	Kirk,F.J.	Rode	Maynard	Kelley	
8/13/1880					Gies	
6/17/1881	Morgan	Kelley	Rode	Book	Gies	
7/01/1881				Ramsden		
6/30/1882	Ramsden	Kelley	Rode	McKnight	Gies	
3/02/1883			McKnight			
6/29/1883	Ramsden	McKnight	McKnight	Sermin	Gies	
6/07/1884	Ramsden	Kelley	Rode	Sermin	Gies	
6/05/1885	Ramsden	Kelley	Rode	Sermin	Gies	
6/04/1886	Ramsden	Kelley	Shinkle	Sermin	McKnight	Rode
6/03/1887	Ramsden	Kelley	Rode	Sermin	McKnight	
6/01/1888	Ramsden	Gies	Rode	Sermin	McKnight	
6/07/1889	Ramsden	Gies	Rode	Sermin	McKnight	

MEMBERSHIP

1.	6/14/1878	Clapp, George H.	
2.	6/14/1878	Rode, George W.	
3.	6/14/1878	Shipman, R.W.	
4.	6/14/1878	Rivett, John	
5.	6/14/1878	Kirk, Frank J.	
6.	6/14/1878	Morgan, S.H.	
7.	6/14/1878	Maynard, Elbert F.	
8.	6/14/1878	McKnight, Henry	
9.	12/27/1878	Comingo, E.G.	
10.	1/10/1879	Sermin, Ferdinand	
11.	1/17/1879	Haslett, W.R.	
12.	1/17/1989	Kelley, J.E.H.	
13.	1/31/1879	Murphy, Sidney F.	
14.	1/31/1879	Gies, A. Charles	
15.	4/18/1879	Glockner, A., Jr.	
16.	5/02/1879	Rogers, A.J.	
17.	5/16/1879	Book, Robert D.	
18.	6/13/1879	White, David J.	
19.	7/25/1879	Ramsden, Thomas	
20.	8/22/1879	Breed, Henry A.	
21.	8/29/1879	Hildebrand, Jesse	
22.	10/24/1879	Coursin, B.B.	
23.	10/24/1879	Murray, J. S.	
24.	10/24/1879	Kirk, Charles W.	
25.	11/07/1879	Cotton, J.C.	
26.	11/14/1879	Buettler, W.L.	
27.	1/16/1880	Schmauk, Benjamin T.	
28.	6/18/1880	Poillon, William	(c - New York)
29.	7/16/1880	Woodward, W. E.	(c - Roxbury, MA)
30.	11/19/1880	Cunningham,Thomas	(c - Mohawk, NY)
31.	3/04/1881	Nichols, G.P.	(c - Springfield, MA)
32.	8/07/1885	Shinkle, Charles H.	

33. 8/07/1885 Wilson, H.E.
34. 8/07/1885 Scott, G.W. (later voided)
35. 8/07/1885 Low, Lyman H. (c - New York, NY)

MEMBER	BORN	ELECTED	LEFT	DIED
Book		5/16/1879	n 1/06/1888	
Breed		8/22/1879	r 6/07/1881	
Buettler		1879	n 6/30/1882	
Clapp		6/14/1878	r10/06/1882	
Comingo		12/27/1878	r 1880	
Cotton		11/07/1879	r 1880	
Coursin		10/24/1879	e 1/05/1883	
c Cunningham		11/19/1880		
Gies		1/31/1879		
Glockner		4/18/1879	n 6/07/1884	
Haslett		1/17/1879	n 6/30/1882	
Hildebrand		8/29/1879	r 4/07/1882	
Kelley		1/17/1879		
Kirk, C.W		10/24/1879	n 6/30/1882	
Kirk, F.W.		6/14/1878	r12/17/1880	
Maynard		6/14/1878	n 6/07/1884	
McKnight		6/14/1878		
Morgan		6/14/1878	e 4/07/1882	
Murphy		1/31/1879	n 6/30/1882	
Murray			r 1/25/1880	
c Nichols		3/04/1881		
Ramsden		7/25/1879		
Rivett		6/14/1878		
Rode		6/14/1878		
Rogers		5/02/1879	r 3/19/1880	
Sermin		1/10/1879		
Schmauk		1880	n 6/30/1882	
Scott		5/07/1886		
Sermin				
Shinkle		8/07/1885	n 1/06/1888	
Shipman		6/14/1878	n 6/07/1884	
White		6/13/1879	r 1/19/1880	

r = resigned
n = expelled for nonpayment of dues
e = expelled for other reasons
v = membership voided

AUCTIONS

	DATE	CATALOGER	LOTS	PAGES	WITH COMP.	PRICED CATALOGS
	01/28/1879	R. W. Shipman	359	12		
	This is Shipman's only sale. An unpriced copy of this catalog was offered in the Kirk sale (Morgan, 6/27/1878, lot 17) where it brought 40 cents.					
	3/11/1879	S. H. Morgan	375	13		
	This is Morgan's first sale.					
	4/30/1879	J. Adler	225	8		
	This is Adler's only sale. Scarce catalog, according to Morgan. The ANS library has a copy. A copy pedigreed to the WPNS library is held by Mr. Armand Champa of Louisville, KY.					
*	6/27/1879	S. H. Morgan	221	8		Rode
	The F. J. Kirk collection. Salmon covers. Scarce catalog, according to Morgan. Kirk was a founding member of WPNS, who would resign on 12/17/1880.					
*	10/16/1879	S. H. Morgan	303	11	Rogers	Rogers
	Grey covers.					
*	12/04/1879	S. H. Morgan	393	14	Rode	Rode
	Scarce catalog, according to Morgan.					

Light green covers.

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* 12/23/1879 S. H. Morgan 225 8 Rogers
Salmon covers.
Scarce catalog, according to Morgan.

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* 1/28/1880 John Haseltine 600 18 (Sampson)
The S. H. Morgan collection.
Offered priced copies of the
following catalogs:
3/11/1879 Morgan (lot 579 $.10)
4/30/1879 Adler (lot 583 $.13)
6/27/1879 Morgan (lot 591 $.25)
10/16/1879 Morgan (lot 597 $.45)
12/04/1879 Morgan (lot 600 $.16)

1/29/1880 S. H. Morgan 227 7
Rare catalog, according to Morgan.
Only 125 copies printed.

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* 5/27/1880 S. H. Morgan 359 13 Rode
Copies exist in both Blue and Grey
covers.

7/29/1880 S. H. Morgan 277 8
The C. W. Kirk collection

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* 9/23/1880 S. H. Morgan 322 12 Rode Rode
Grey covers.

12/07/1880 S. H. Morgan 280 8

1/17/1881 S. H. Morgan 529 17
The Robert. W. Mercer collection

3/30/1881 S. H. Morgan 699 21
The J. H. Keeler collection.

NOTE: Steigerwalt's Ninth sale on
November 7th, 1882 included items
property of Rev. J. H. Keeler, of
Litchfield, MI.

7/27/1881 S. H. Morgan 265 8
This is Morgan's 13th, and last sale.
On 4/7/1882 Morgan was expelled from
WPNS for selling a WPNS medal to a
non-member via one of his sales.
At the same meeting, Jesse Hildebrand
resigned his membership.

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* 4/19/1882 W. E. Woodward 1900 76

The collection of S. H. Morgan, now living in Louisville, KY. Conjecture: Morgan retired to Louisville, putting his personal collection and library up for sale.

Lot 1697 is a copy of Woodward's sale of the Mickley collection, Oct 28, Nov 2, 1867. "pierced for binding and somewhat soiled, but extremely rare".

Lot 1747 is a group of 88 of S. H. Morgan's own sales. "Catalogues of the various Pittsburgh sales, some priced. Of these catalogues some very small editions were printed, and most of them are really rare. The entire stock remaining, 88 pieces."

MEMBER PUBLICATIONS

* Clapp, George H., The United States Cents of the Years 1798-1799, Sewickley, PA, 1931

This is a very rare work, and much sought after by bibliophiles and collectors of Early American Copper.

Low, Lyman H., Hard Times Tokens, Boston, 1886, 91pp

Shinkle, Charles H., U.S. Coin Values and Lists, Pittsburgh, PA., 1905

* -same-, 1909, 20pp, tan cover (from Money Tree #12, lot 848)

* -same-, 1910, 23pp, green cover (from Kolbe #48, lot 643)